

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 OTTAWA 01629 302055Z

13

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

USIA-15 AID-20 COME-00 EB-11 FRB-02 TRSE-00 XMB-07

OPIC-12 CIEP-02 LAB-06 SIL-01 OMB-01 DRC-01 CU-04

/167 W

----- 091065

R 302022Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3572

C O N F I D E N T I A L OTTAWA 1629

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, CA

SUBJECT: FEDERAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN: THE QUEBEC LANGUAGE BILL
COULD HURT TRUDEAU

REF: OTTAWA 1484

1. SUMMARY. ELECTION CAMPAIGN HAS YET TO GENERATE MUCH ENTHUSIASM IN CANADA, AND POSITIONS OF SEVERAL PARTIES INVOLVED REMAIN SO FAR AS REPORTED REFTEL. HOWEVER, THE TABLING OF QUEBEC PREMIER BOURASSA'S OFFICIAL LANGUAGE LEGISLATION HAS RE-RAISED AND RE-POLITICIZED THE ENTIRE BILINGUAL, BICULTURAL ISSUE, AND COULD BECOME AN IMPORTANT FACTOR IN THE CAMPAIGN AT LEAST IN SOME RIDINGS. ALL PARTIES ARE BASICALLY COMMITTED TO THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY OF BILINGUALISM. CONSERVATIVE LEADER STANFIELD AND NDP LEADER LEWIS HAVE CRITICIZED THE BILL, AND EVEN PRIME MINISTER TRUDEAU HAS BACKED AWAY FROM IT. (BOURASSA HIMSELF IS DOING SOME BACK-PEDALLING.) NEVERTHELESS, AS A LIBERAL (CAPITAL L) MEASURE, IT WILL PROBABLY DO LITTLE GOOD FOR FEDERAL LIBERAL CANDIDATES OUTSIDE QUEBEC, WHILE WITHIN THE PROVINCE IT MAY TEND TO POLARIZE THE FRENCH, ENGLISH, AND "THIRD CANADIAN" COMMUNITIES. IN THE LONGER RUN, ISSUE COULD
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 OTTAWA 01629 302055Z

HAVE UNFORTUANTE IMPLICATIONS FOR NATIONAL UNITY. END SUMMARY.

2. "BILL 22" ESTABLISHES FRENCH AS THE ONLY OFFICIAL LANGUAGE IN QUEBEC, SEEKS TO PROMOTE THE USE OF FRENCH IN THE PROVINCE, AND REQUIRES A KNOWLEDGE OF FRENCH FOR EXECUTIVES IN THE PROVINCIAL CIVIL SERVICE. THE MOST CONTROVERSIAL PART OF THE BILL CONCERNS SCHOOLING. THE PRIMARY LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION IS TO BE FRENCH, AND EXCEPTIONS TO USE ENGLISH FOR CERTAIN SCHOOLS CAN BE GRANTED ONLY BY THE PROVINCIAL EDUCATION MINISTER. SCHOOL CHILDREN SPEAKING NEITHER ENGLISH NOR FRENCH AS NATIVE LANGUAGE MUST RECEIVE INSTRUCTION IN FRENCH.

3. FRENCH COMMUNITY IN QUEBEC HAS GENERALLY APPROVED THE THRUST OF THE BILL, THOUGH PARTI QUEBECOIS LEADER RENE LEVESQUE HAS ATTACKED IT FOR NOT GOING FAR ENOUGH. ANGLOPHONE REACTION HAS BEEN HIGHLY CRITICAL, HOWEVER, AND SEVERAL ENGLISH-ORIGIN LIBERAL MLA'S HAVE PUBLICLY DISASSOCIATED THEMSELVES FROM BOURASSA ON THIS ISSUE. ALTHOUGH IMMIGRANTS IN QUEBEC ARE NOT ORGANIZED TO FORM POLITICAL BLOC, IT LIKELY THAT DENIAL OF FREEDOM OF CHOICE FOR LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION WILL NOT SIT WELL WITH "THIRD CANADIANS" IN QUEBEC OR ELSEWHERE.

4. THE QUEBEC LANGUAGE BILL HAS BEEN CRITICIZED THROUGHOUT CANADA AS BEING ARBITRARY AND POORLY DRAFTED. TRUDEAU HAS REITERATED THAT FREEDOM OF CHOICE REMAINS GOVERNMENT POLICY "APPLICABLE FOR CITIZENS OF ALL PROVINCES." STANFIELD AND LEWIS HAVE BEEN MORE OUTSPOKEN, CALLING THE BILL BAD AND DIVISIVE. BOURASSA HAS BACKED OFF SOMEWHAT, INDICATING READINESS TO ACCEPT REVISIONS AND AMENDMENTS. BUT FOR FEDERAL CAMPAIGN, SOME DAMAGE HAS ALREADY BEEN DONE.

5. AT THIS JUNCTURE, EMBASSY DOES NOT RPT NOT BELIEVE THE BILL WILL HAVE MUCH EFFECT ON FEDERAL RESULTS IN QUEBEC. LIBERALS HAVE HUGE MAJORITY (56 OF 74 SEATS) WHICH THEY MAY EVEN INCREASE BY WINNING A FEW SOCIAL CREDIT RIDINGS. IN PRAIRIE PROVINCES WHERE LIBERALS MIGHT BE HURT, THEIR REPRESENTATION IS SO SPARSE THAT EFFECT OF THIS CONTROVERSY PROBABLY MINIMAL. IN ONTARIO, HOWEVER, WHICH MANY OBSERVERS BELIEVE KEY TO ELECTION RESULTS AND WHERE THERE ARE LARGE IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES, BOURASSA'S LEGISLATION WILL OFFER TEMPTING TARGET TO CONSERVATIVES AND NDP. THE ISSUE COULD BE A POTENTIALLY

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 OTTAWA 01629 302055Z

DIVISIVE ONE FOR CANADA. KEEPING QUEBEC SOLIDLY IN THE FEDERAL FOLD WAS ONE OF THE MAJOR OBJECTIVES FOR TRUDEAU'S ENTRY INTO FEDERAL POLITICS, AND HAS BEEN REPRESENTED AS ONE OF HIS MOST SIGNIFICANT SUCCESSES. NATIONAL POLARIZATION OVER THE LANGUAGE ISSUE COULD BE DAMAGING TO THE FABRIC OF CANADIAN CONFEDERATION, AND BOURASSA'S AWKWARD AND ILL-TIMED LEGISLATION COULD CONTRIBUTE TO SUCH DEVELOPMENT.

PORTER

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, REPORTS, PARTY UNITY, NATIONALISM, POLITICAL STABILITY, PARTY LINE, ELECTION CAMPAIGNS, NATIONAL ELECTIONS, NATIONAL UNIFICATION, OFFICIAL LANGUAGE
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 30 MAY 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: garlanwa
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974OTTAWA01629
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740137-0219
From: OTTAWA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t1974057/aaaaafvq.tel
Line Count: 115
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: OTTAWA 1484
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: garlanwa
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 15 APR 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <15 APR 2002 by kelleyw0>; APPROVED <29 JUL 2002 by garlanwa>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FEDERAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN: THE QUEBEC LANGUAGE BILL COULD HURT TRUDEAU
TAGS: PINT, CA
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005